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ABSTRACT

This book explores the development of critical cultural awareness through the process of teaching and learning about foreign cultures. It draws upon theoretical foundations relating to inter- and intra-cultural communication from contemporary philosophical movements, namely critical theory and postmodernism. The study adopts critical pedagogy as the educational framework providing guidelines for taking a critical perspective toward both native and foreign cultures. It examines the critical dimension of some selected documents and models used worldwide for teaching/learning culture within foreign language classes. It includes a research project conducted by secondary school teachers in English as a Foreign Language in Portugal whose national syllabus suggests a critical approach to English-speaking cultures. This project aimed to do the following: illustrate how practicing teachers approached foreign cultures critically, provide some grounded theory for a definition of critical cultural awareness within foreign language/culture education and inspire a proposal for teacher education and development. Finally, the book presents a general proposal for the development of critical cultural awareness and intercultural communication competence among prospective and practicing teachers of foreign languages/cultures. Appended are: Questionnaire; "Questionario" A; "Questionario" B; Statistical Results of the Questionnaires A and B; Interview Guide for Focus-Group; and Questions for American Teacher Trainers. An index is also included. (Contains approximately 625 references.) (SM)

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